REMARKS

Claims 1-2 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) for anticipation by U.S. Patent No. 3,960,824 to Hicks. The Hicks patent discloses that organic mercaptans may be used as polymerization catalysts in bulk polymerization of ethylenically unsaturated monomers to produce low molecular weight polymers that are carried out in the presence of oxygen. See the Abstract. The Hicks patent explains the need for oxygen or air to accelerate polymerization at col. 4, lines 15-26. Example 6 of the Hicks patent provides a particular description of bulk polymerization of styrene with various acrylic monomers in an atmosphere of air (in the presence of oxygen) with using 1-thioglycerol as an intermittent addition catalyst.

In contrast, the present invention is directed to a bulk polymerization composition that includes an acrylic monomer in an inert gas atmosphere that is provided substantially in the absence of an active gas. Claims 1 and 2 have been cancelled. The catalyst of claims 1 and 2 is now claimed in claims 3 and 4 in combination with an acrylic monomer that is provided in an inert atmosphere substantially in the absence of an active gas (oxygen). The claimed combination of the catalyst with the acrylic monomer in an inert atmosphere excludes a composition in the presence of oxygen. Support therefor appears at least at page 9, lines 7-10 of the specification. No new matter has been added.

New claims 3 and 4 are believed to define over the prior art and be in condition for allowance.

Reconsideration of the rejection as applied to claims 3 and 4 and allowance of claims 3 and 4 are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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